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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Info SS G SP H EUR P USIA NSC INR CIA NSA DOD IGA AID E RSR

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DE RUQMBE 381B 0201706
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 686
INFO RUQMKG/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 140
RUFHDN/AMEMBASSY LONDON 65
RUFHPA/AMEMBASSY PARIS 71
BT
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JAN 20

1. BEIRUT'S DAILY STAR AND AL-HAYAT JANUARY 20 CARRIED UNUSAULLY INACCURATE, MIXED-UP REPORT (EVEN BY BEIRUT PRESS STANDARDS) SUGGESTING THAT VISIT TO AMMAN OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S BROTHER-IN-LAW ANTONIA J. TAYLOR MAY BE CONNECTED WITH US ASSISTANCE IN FINANCING $75 MILLION PURCHASE BY JORDAN OF BRITAIN'S MARK V LIGHTNING INTERCEPTORS. ARTICLE STATES THAT DESPITE EMBASSY OFFICIAL'S EXPLANATION TO EDITOR THAT TAYLOR WAS GOING TO JORDAN TO STUDY MARKETING OF JORDAN HANDICRAFT AND DESPITE TAYLOR'S OWN STATEMENT HE WAS AN AID CONSULTANT AND WAS SENT BY AID TO STUDY PHASES OF ECONOMIC SITUATION IN JORDAN, TAYLOR'S VISIT "MAY BE RELATED TO JORDAN'S EXPECTED PURCHASES UK AIRCRAFT." ARTICLE QUOTED SOURCES AS SAYING "THIS IS THE ONLY PROBLEM THAT MAY CALL FOR THE DISPATCH OF A MAN OF MR. TAYLOR'S CALIBER TO THE JORDANIAN CAPITAL."

2. ARTICLE ALLEGES THAT AS US UNWILLING PROVIDE AIRCRAFT FOR JORDAN, JORDAN'S PREFERENCE SHIFTED TO FRENCH MIRAGE 3E, FOR WHICH USG FINALLY AGREED PAY HALF OF COST. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING DE GAULLE'S REELECTION, US INSISTED JORDAN SHIFT TO UK'S LIGHTNINGS.

3. REMAINDER OF ARTICLE CONSISTS OF REPRINT STATEMENT ALLEGEDLY PROVIDED BY BRITISH SOURCES EXTOLLING CAPABILITIES OF LIGHTNINGS IN REBUTTAL TO WHAT ARTICLE DESCRIBES AS FRENCH-INSPIRED ATTACKS IN BEIRUT PRESS RE SUPERIORITY MIRAGES OVER LIGHTNINGS.

4. COMMENT: WHILE EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT ARTICLE WILL HAVE ANY IMPACT IN LEBANON, IT COULD POSSIBLY MUDDY WATERS IN JORDAN AND ELSEWHERE AND PROVE SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO TAYLOR AND GOVERNMENTS MENTIONED. PORTER
BT

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